



## *The President's Daily Brief*

~~Top Secret~~ 19 March 1967



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DAILY BRIEF  
19 MARCH 1967

1. Communist China

The top-level feuding goes on. Supporters of Chou En-lai are now putting up wall posters defending him against unnamed opponents. This is a clear sign that Chou--the most prominent voice of reason in the tumult--has been the target of more radical leaders trying to undercut him.

Other signs of resurgent radical efforts are cropping up. The compromise arrangements reached last month with leaders in strategic border regions like Sinkiang are now coming under violent attack from powerful Red Guard groups in Peking.

2. Vietnam

[redacted] recent defector reports indicate North Vietnamese units in the Demilitarized Zone may be getting ready to attack in force US Marine and South Vietnamese airborne elements operating in northern Quang Tri Province. At least four Communist regiments, supported by two heavy weapons battalions, are believed available.

A major attack might have the dual purpose of neutralizing the heavy US artillery near the Demilitarized Zone and of diverting allied attention from continuing infiltration of Communist units from Laos into western Quang Tri.

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### 3. South Vietnam

Ky's deal with the Constituent Assembly is not sitting well with General Thieu and other members of the Directorate. [REDACTED]

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Directorate leaders claim they had planned initially to take a hard bargaining line with the assembly. What especially bothers them is Ky's agreement to let the assembly serve as a full-fledged legislature for the period between election of a president and a new legislature. The Directorate had wanted to retain all powers until both were elected.

Thieu and company have, for the moment, bowed to the inevitable, accepting the constitution "in principle." However, they will have one final crack at it when the Armed Forces Council meets after Guam to approve its promulgation. Even if they pass up this opportunity, the whole affair will further complicate relations between Ky and Thieu as they jockey for the presidential nomination.

### 4. Nigeria

This unfortunate country has slipped farther toward chaos in recent days. The federal government issued a "constitutional" decree on Friday which is likely to push the recalcitrant Eastern Region to the brink of secession--if not beyond. [REDACTED]

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## 5. Soviet Union

Brezhnev personally put the screws on Hungarian party boss Kadar last month in an apparently futile effort to bring him into line on the question of West Germany. Rumania had already broken ranks by unconditionally recognizing Bonn, and now Hungary seemed inclined to follow suit.



This, of course, is only one facet in Moscow's effort to strengthen East European resistance to Bonn's recent diplomatic initiatives and to forestall East Germany's isolation. Kadar's apparent resistance to Brezhnev's arm-twisting reinforces our belief that Moscow's effort can only be a delaying operation.

## 6. France

De Gaulle's forces are planning a tricky maneuver to get control of key posts in the new assembly, where they will have the barest majority. The cabinet is to resign on 1 April to permit those who were elected deputies to take part in the election of assembly officers and committee chairmen. Then they are to resign their assembly seats and be reappointed to the cabinet. Members of the government cannot vote in parliament.

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## 7. French Somaliland

The people went to the polls on Sunday as scheduled. French riot police were called out to suppress at least two outbreaks. As yet we have no basis to predict the outcome of the voting.

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In Somalia, the Soviet ambassador implied to Ambassador Thurston that his government, too, is anxious that there be no hostilities between Ethiopia and Somalia. He hinted strongly that Moscow is deliberately holding up a much-needed shipment of diesel fuel for Somalia until well after the referendum.

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## 8. Lebanon

The country seems headed for dark days. This is the growing feeling among official and nonofficial contacts of the US Embassy in Beirut. The fear is that despite its vaunted neutrality, Lebanon is being drawn willy-nilly into the whirlpool of Arab rivalries beyond its borders.

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